

Biomass Harvest Guidelines Sub-Group Meeting  
DNRC Forestry Division Headquarters, Missoula  
January 25, 2011

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:** Jeff Schmalenberg, Brian Sugden, Julia Altemus, Angela Farr, Joe Kerkvliet, Shawn Thomas, Julie Kies, Roger Ziesak, Steve Hayes, Paul McKenzie, Leo Brett.

**Agenda**

- 1) Review revisions to BMP Handbook that expand considerations for slash treatment and biomass—Roger Z.
- 2) Review draft biomass harvest guidelines—Julie K.

**Minutes**

- 1) Review revisions to BMP Handbook that expand considerations for slash treatment and biomass—Roger Z.

Roger provided draft of revisions and is seeking review/comments from the sub-group by February 15, 2011. Suggestions will be presented at the next meeting of BMP Work Group sometime this spring.

**Action Item:**

The group will get comments back to Roger Z on revisions to BMP Handbook by Feb. 15.

- 2) Review draft biomass harvest guidelines—Julie K.

There was extensive discussion on the value and practicality of developing the biomass retention guidelines document namely because the guidance, for the most part, is already present in timber harvest/forest practices, laws, rules, guidelines, etc.

Shawn T noted the issues of concern most raised seem related to sustainability and soils. Joe K added the concerns for biodiversity. Joe noted that there is some skepticism in the conservation community around the reports on biomass availability. One concern is if there is enough forest material to feed a local biomass energy development for 20-40 years. Further, it doesn't appear that there is concern over whether/not a forest would be denuded of trees and organic material, but rather the concern is whether/not we should be entering certain forest types.

The group discussed the need to create guidance for soils that we are missing. State and federal resource agencies already have forest practice laws/rules that address the resources of concern we've identified, and more. It is with NIPFs that we have greater opportunity to provide guidance. There is good information/guidance already available, and in development, for water quality (Forestry BMPs) and wildlife (existing DNRC pub on voluntary wildlife guidelines for SMZs and others being developed). There is a gap in educational materials for soils.

Paul McKenzie is working with other partners to produce a "wildlife guide for Montana woodlot owners" targeted to NIPFs. He provided an outline of what they are drafting. It looks very comprehensive,

covering topics beyond DNRC's wildlife guidelines for SMZs. This will be published as a glossy color pamphlet available to the public, foresters, etc. This pamphlet appears to sufficiently cover what we were aiming at with the biomass guidelines and will be a great resource.

After continued discussion, the group decided that instead of producing a stand-alone biomass harvest guidelines document, we would do more to use the existing resources and outlets we have while doing more to educate the public and landowners about existing forest practices and regulations. The following 5 actions were identified:

**Action Items:**

- 1) Capture trends in biomass harvest impacts during the BMP audit process and through observations made by service foresters. Roger Z will discuss this suggestion with BMP Work Group at next spring meeting.
- 2) Draft and publish a 2-4 page color soil productivity brochure. Jeff S. will draft an outline and send to Julie K. by Feb. 16. Julie will work with others to finalize publication with pictures, etc to be included as reference in Strategy doc (aim for completion in March).
- 3) Will include discussion of "resource values of concern" within the Biomass Utilization Strategy document. Joe K will draft for review by strategy sub-group, starting with resources addressed in harvest guidelines.
- 4) DNRC will create an FAQ/synthesis paper that will identify existing forestry rules, regs, etc. that address resource values of concern for publication to DNRC website and provide hard copies as needed. Julie K. and Leo B. will draft.
- 5) DNRC will draft and publish a pamphlet for NIPFs on slash management including benefits of biomass retention, etc. including the effects of slash/biomass removal/retention on biodiversity as well as how slash burning might be done to enhance the forest site. Roger Z. will begin drafting. Julie will share copy of Alternatives to Burning handout that may help inform.